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Short answers are given to questions asked about general findings in educational research, based on empirical evidence collected in research theses at Boston University.

Eight question areas deal with students in grades 4-6. Reading, both oral and silent, word analysis and spelling, children's interest and preferences, vocabulary, mental imagery, texts and workshops and study skills are treated. Beginning reading, basal readers, factors affecting reading achievement, reading tests and material use are treated for grade one.

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MOBILIZATION FOR YOUTH - EDUCATION - READING PROGRAM

SURVEY OF READING RESEARCH

Bulletin #1 Grade One

LET'S ASK RESEARCH-ABOUT BEGINNING READING

All answers are based on empirical evidence collected in research at Boston University.

WHAT IS THE BEST SINGLE PREDICTOR OF READING SUCCESS IN SEPTEMBER OF GRADE ONE?

Knowledge of letter names. It is the best predictor of February and June reading achievement scores in thousands of cases.

WHAT ARE TWO ESSENTIAL SKILLS IN BEGINNING READING?

Knowing letter names and phonics.

MUST A SIGHT VOCABULARY OF 75 WORDS BE MASTERED BEFORE INITIATING WORD ANALYSIS INSTRUCTION?

According to present empirical evidence, NO!

IS A MENTAL AGE OF SEVEN NECESSARY FOR THE USE OF PHONICS?

No.

WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC SEPTEMBER TESTS THAT BEST PREDICT READING SUCCESS?

Writing letters dictated, naming letters, identifying letters named, learning rate for words.

WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC FEBRUARY TESTS THAT BEST PREDICT JUNE READING SUCCESS?

Hearing sounds in words, applied phonics, sounding lower case letters.

DO CHILDREN WITH HIGH LEARNING RATES AT BEGINNING OF GRADE ONE NEED READING READINESS TO ACHIEVE IN READING?

NO. June scores on one group with high learning rate and no reading readiness in grade one scored above grade three at the end of grade one.

WHICH PROGRAM PRODUCES BETTER READERS IN GRADE ONE: SYSTEMATIC PHONICS AND LETTER KNOWLEDGE WITH INCIDENTAL WORD RECOGNITION VS. SYSTEMATIC WORD RECOGNITION WITH INCIDENTAL PHONICS AND LETTER KNOWLEDGE?

The former.

WHAT ARE THE IMPORTANT FACTORS IN BEGINNING READING?

Phonics, auditory discrimination, visual discrimination, letter names, in that order in the first two grades. By grade 3, letter names drop out, but the other factors are still the most important subskills.

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Graduate School

LET'S ASK RESEARCH - ABOUT BEGINNING READING

HOW EARLY MAY INDIVIDUALIZED READING BEGIN IN THE EARLY GRADES?

Grade one.

IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT TO SCHOOL AND READING ACHIEVEMENT?

Of course. However, it is not as high in grade one as we might expect.

IS TEAM LEARNING EFFECTIVE IN GRADE ONE?

Preliminary results show it is. This is especially so in using commercial workbook exercises for developing word recognition skills.

Prepared by:

S. Alan Cohen
Director of Reading

10/30/63
/md

MOBILIZATION FOR YOUTH - EDUCATION - READING PROGRAM

SURVEY OF READING RESEARCH

Bulletin #2 Grade One

LET'S ASK RESEARCH ——— ABOUT BASAL READERS

All answers are based on empirical evidence collected in research at Boston University

DO CHILDREN LIKE THE STORIES IN BASAL READERS?

Generally, yes. The few stories disliked recalled unpleasant experiences or associations for respondents.

WHAT KINDS OF STORIES DO FIRST GRADERS PREFER IN THEIR BASALS?

Humor, animal and adventure in that order.

ARE THE STANDARDS FOR GOOD ILLUSTRATIONS IN BASAL READERS THE SAME FOR ADULTS AND CHILDREN?

No.

DO ILLUSTRATIONS IN BASAL READERS AGREE WITH CONTENT?

No. Many inaccuracies and irrelevancies are found in the books. The most frequent ones are color, word and story concepts.

AT WHAT LEVEL MAY TEACHERS INTERCHANGE TEXTS FROM DIFFERENT STORIES?

After the pre-primer, because there is little control of vocabulary.

HOW WELL DOES THE VOCABULARY OF READING ACHIEVEMENT TESTS CORRELATE WITH BASAL READERS?

Very poorly. The three tests that had the highest percentage of like words were the Unit Scales of Attainment, the Reilley and the Gates Primary Reading Tests. At best, these were weak.

ARE THE VOCABULARIES IN THE DIRECTIONS TO BASAL WORKBOOKS SIMILAR TO THAT IN BASAL READERS?

It depends. At pre-primer and primer, Row Peterson offers not a single word that is not in the primer, but other companies introduce as much as 110 words that are not in the basal reader (Lyons and Carnahan). By grade one, the discrepancies range from 11 to 166 words.

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MOBILIZATION FOR YOUTH - EDUCATION - READING PROGRAM

SURVEY OF READING RESEARCH

Bulletin #3 Grade One

LET'S ASK RESEARCH ---- ABOUT FACTORS AFFECTING READING ACHIEVEMENT

All answers are based on empirical evidence collected in research at Boston University

WHAT FACTORS AFFECT READING ACHIEVEMENT MOST IN GRADE ONE?

Visual and auditory discrimination and phonics. Mental ability drops to third place next to these factors.

WHAT IS THE RELATIVE ORDER OF DIFFICULTY OF CONSONANTS IN AUDITORY DISCRIMINATION?

G is the easiest initial consonant to discriminate.
W is the most difficult initial consonant.
CH is the easiest initial blend.
SH is the most difficult initial blend.
Y, S are the easiest to discriminate at the end.
N, P, D are the most difficult to discriminate at the end.

WHAT IS THE RELATIVE ORDER OF DIFFICULTY OF VOWELS IN AUDITORY DISCRIMINATION?

From easy to difficult:

At the beginning: short o-i-a-u-e

in the middle : short o-a-e-i-u
long e-o-u-o-i

WHICH IS MORE EFFECTIVE: TEACHING WORDS IN ISOLATION OR IN PHRASES?

In isolation, again and again.

WHICH WORDS ARE MORE EASILY LEARNED, COLORFUL WORDS OR ABSTRACT WORDS?

Colorful.

DO CHILDREN'S SPONTANEOUS SPEAKING VOCABULARIES CHANGE THROUGH THE YEARS?

Yes. The old published lists do not contain a significant number of words that are common in the contemporary first grader's vocabulary.

DO ILLUSTRATIONS INFLUENCE THE COMPREHENSION OF READING MATERIAL? --- NO.

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE TEACHING OF HOMONYMS? --- Very. First graders tend to miss 70% of the homonyms they come across in their early reading.

ARE POORER READERS ABSENT MORE OFTEN THAN GOOD READERS? --- NO.

WHICH HAS A GREATER EFFECT ON READING: CURSIVE OR MANUSCRIPT WRITING?

Manuscript, slightly.

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MOBILIZATION FOR YOUTH - EDUCATION - READING PROGRAM

SURVEY OF READING RESEARCH

Bulletin #4 Grade One

LET'S ASK RESEARCH --- ABOUT TESTING READING AND USING MATERIALS

All answers are based on empirical evidence collected in research at Boston University

WHAT ARE THE BEST PREDICTIVE CORRELATIONS OF READING SUCCESS IN GRADE ONE?

1. Writing letters from dictation (.60)
2. Naming capital letters (.58)
3. Learning rate (.51)
4. IQ (.45)
5. MA (.44)
6. CA (.06)

WHAT ARE THE CORRELATIONS BETWEEN INTELLIGENCE AND READING SUCCESS?

Studies at B.U. show ranges from .28 to .48

HOW EFFECTIVE IS TEACHER JUDGEMENT AS A PREDICTOR OF READING SUCCESS?

Much better than the Pintner Cunningham Primary Mental Test and the Gates Readiness Test.

ARE VISUAL PERCEPTION TESTS GOOD PREDICTORS OF READING SUCCESS?

No, especially if they use geometric forms.

DOES SYSTEMATIC PLANNED PHONICS PROGRAMS IMPROVE READING COMPREHENSION?

Yes.

WHICH PHONIC ELEMENTS GIVE THE MOST DIFFICULTY TO BEGINNING READERS?

Middle sounds, then final sounds.

CAN FIRST GRADERS USE MATERIALS THAT ARE SELF DIRECTED WORKING IN TEAMS WITH STUDENT LEADERS?

Yes; both the fast and the slow learner benefit.

Our thanks to Harding, Leahy, Norris, Smith Ed.M's, 1963, Boston University, for compiling some of the research. Ultimately, Drs. Durrell, Murphy, Sullivan deserve the credits.

Prepared by: S. Alan Cohen
Director of Reading

/ad
10/30/63

#1 Intermediate Grades

LET'S ASK RESEARCH

All answers are based on empirical evidence collected in research theses at Boston University.

WHAT EFFECT DOES ADJUSTMENT OF READING MATERIAL TO THE INDIVIDUAL'S READING LEVEL HAVE ON READING ACHIEVEMENT?

As difficulty of material increases, gains in reading achievement decrease.

Proper adjustment of basal reading materials to instructional level directly affects reading achievement.

AT WHAT POINT IS READING MATERIAL "DIFFICULT" FOR A CHILD?

Primary: 2 word perception errors per 100 running words

Intermediate: 4 word perception errors per 100 running words

N.B. Word perception errors were found to be the best single criterion for determining suitability of material.

DOES SUMMER VACATION AFFECT READING ACHIEVEMENT?

In grades 3, 4, & 5 reading comprehension scores drop, but vocabulary holds. Low achievers lose more than high achievers.

DO ILLUSTRATIONS AFFECT COMPREHENSION?

In grades 5 & 6 they do, IF you call the reader's attention to the illustrations as he reads.

This is especially true in groups with average intelligence.

DOES VISUAL ACUITY AFFECT SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT?

Not significantly. (Unless, of course, the subject is blind!)

DOES HANDEDNESS AFFECT ACHIEVEMENT?

Nope!

ARE READING ACHIEVEMENT SCORES A GOOD BASIS FOR GROUPING FOR READING INSTRUCTION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL?

Nope -- if by reading instruction you include training in hearing sounds in words, visual discrimination, spelling, oral reading, word pronunciation, applied phonics, aided oral recall, unaided oral recall, homophones, written recall, skimming, syllabication, speed of silent reading, elaborative thinking, speed of locating words in a dictionary, diacritical marks, word pronunciation, learning rate, main ideas and other skills.

WHY?

Because, regardless of homogeneity of achievement scores, the above listed skills run the entire curve.

So, if you group, then you had better individualize.

DOES READING ABILITY AFFECT INTELLIGENCE MEASURES?

Yes.

The new Binet revision reduced the amount of required reading, but it, too, is still affected by reading disability.

WHAT CAN WE BELIEVE ABOUT STANDARDIZED READING TESTS?

Too little - -

1. 20 leading "reading achievement" tests in fact measure 15 different things.

2. The announced function of a test does not adequately describe its function.

3. Description of nature of norms is absent in over 80% of the test manuals.

4. Types of reliability coefficients are not reported in about 50% of the manuals.

5. Grade level discriminations are so small that they are unreliable in about 42% of the tests.

My thanks to Mike Gorman, Herb Simons, Julia Hoover and Eleanor Howland, Ed.M.'s, B. U., 1963.

S.A.C.

MOBILIZATION FOR YOUTH

#2 Intermediate Grades

LET'S ASK RESEARCH . . . ABOUT ORAL & SILENT READING

All answers are based on empirical evidence collected in research theses at Boston University.

IN ORAL READING, SHOULD WE TELL A CHILD A WORD HE DOESN'T KNOW OR SHOULD WE MAKE HIM SOUND IT OUT?

If you measure word recognition, word meaning, and story comprehension, it doesn't make a difference.

IS IT BETTER FOR THE CHILD TO LEARN CONTENT BY LISTENING OR BY SILENT READING?

Up to grade six, by listening.

WHAT ARE THE MOST COMMON BAD READING HABITS OF 4TH GRADERS?

In order of frequency:

1. Lip movements
2. Head movements
3. Frowning from tenseness
4. Repeating words
5. Inadequate phrasing
6. Whispering in silent reading
7. Monotonous drone in oral reading
8. Inserting words
9. Poor spelling
10. No knowledge of sounds in spelling

DOES TACHISTOSCOPIC TRAINING AFFECT READING?

Yes. General achievement, speed of oral reading, word recognition with meaning, all increase. Errors in oral reading decrease.

DOES VOCAL PITCH CHANGE WITH READING TASKS IN ELEMENTARY GRADES?

Yes. Oral reading pitch is higher than speaking level. Pitch goes up with increase in difficulty of content. Boys show it more than girls.

CAN BRIGHT SIXTH GRADERS IMPROVE THEIR ORAL READING SKILLS?

Of course! And in only 4 weeks!

Thanks again to Gorman, Simons, Hoover, and Howland. Ed.M., B.U., 1963.

SAC
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#3 Intermediate Grades

LET'S ASK RESEARCH ABOUT....

.... WORD ANALYSIS AND SPELLING

WHAT SKILLS ARE MOST CLOSELY RELATED TO SPELLING SUCCESS?

Visual perception, visual and auditory discrimination of words, visual analysis, writing from visual and auditory stimuli respectively.

WHAT SKILLS TAUGHT IN BASAL WORKBOOKS ARE MOST CLOSELY RELATED TO WORD PRONUNCIATION AND SPELLING?

Knowledge of diacritical marks, homophones and visual memory, in that order.

DOES AUDITORY DISCRIMINATION INSURE SPELLING SUCCESS?

Nope!

WHAT SKILL FACTORS HAVE THE HIGHEST POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH GENERAL READING ACHIEVEMENT?

Phonics ability and visual discrimination (again & again since 1932). Mental age is the third factor, but that isn't a skill--or is it?

DO HANDWRITING SCORES CORRELATE WITH SPELLING SCORES?

Nope (except in S.L.D.'s)

WHAT IS THE SINGLE MOST EFFECTIVE TECHNIQUE TO TEACH WORD ANALYSIS IN INTERMEDIATE GRADES?

Word classification techniques.

The basic thank you's go to Durrell, Murphy and Sullivan who have instigated hundreds of research theses during the past 30 years.

S.A.C.

MOBILIZATION FOR YOUTH

#4 Intermediate Grades

LET'S ASK RESEARCH ABOUT CHILDREN'S INTERESTS AND PREFERENCES

WHAT TYPES OF ASSIGNMENTS DO CHILDREN PREFER?

Multiple texts preferred to single texts

Self direction " " teacher direction

Team learning " " learning alone

WHAT SPECIFIC TASKS DO CHILDREN PREFER?

In order of choice: excursions, free reading, construction, talking, drawing.

DO CHILDREN ENJOY TALKING AS AN ACTIVITY?

Of course, but children from "progressive" schools prefer it more often than those in "conservative" schools.

WHO PREFERS WRITING MORE, GIRLS OR BOYS?

Girls.

WHO PREFERS CONSTRUCTION MORE, GOOD READERS OR POOR READERS?

Good readers.

IS A PUPIL SPECIALTIES PROGRAM IN THE DAILY CLASS ROUTINE EFFECTIVE?

For grades 4, 5, & 6, yes, if it is based on the individual's hobbies.

WHAT CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES PROMOTE POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARD READING?

Room and school library, small group instruction, basic readers, special instruction for some pupils, specific diagnoses of individual needs, bulletin boards, differentiated assignments, previous experience of teacher, story telling or reading by teacher. (In 20 different classrooms, over 50% of the children rated reading as 1st or 2nd choice among school activities. Each room scored over 75% on those activities listed above.)

IS THE USE OF PLAYS EFFECTIVE TO TEACH CONTENT?

Yes.

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO GET CHILDREN INTERESTED IN READING PLAYS?

By giving them plays to read aloud, what else???

DOES THE CHILD'S PREFERENCE FOR READING RELATE TO HIS ACHIEVEMENT?

Yes -- more so than in arithmetic.

DOES AMOUNT OF FREE READING RELATE TO READING ACHIEVEMENT WHEN IQ IS HELD CONSTANT?

Naturally!

WHAT IS THE ORDER OF PREFERENCE FOR TYPES OF LITERARY FORMS?

Book, story, cartoon, play, article, and, finally, poem.

WHAT ARE THE FAVORITE SUBJECTS FOR READING WITH BOYS AND GIRLS?

Animal and mystery stories.

WHICH CLASSICS ARE CHILDREN MOST FAMILIAR WITH?

Alice, Peter Rabbit, Pinocchio, Treasure Island, Tom Sawyer, The Story of Ferdinand, The Black Stallion, Peter Pan, Robin Hood, Johnny Tremaine.

DO GIRLS AND BOYS LIKE THE SAME SUBJECTS?

Girls will read stories that appeal to boys, but boys tend not to reciprocate. This is especially true of comic strips.

S.A.C.

MOBILIZATION FOR YOUTH

#5 Intermediate Grades

LET'S ASK RESEARCH ABOUT VOCABULARY

CAN PUPILS LEARN NEW WORDS IN CONTEXT?

Better readers do so better than poorer readers. However, in general, intermediate grade pupils do not recognize unfamiliar words from context.

WHICH SYSTEM TEACHES VOCABULARY BETTER, AUDITORY VISUAL OR KINESTHETIC TACTILE?

The A-V results in greater gains faster but the K-T is more lasting.

DO GLOSSARIES AID ACHIEVEMENT?

Not usually.

WHICH WORDS ARE EASIER TO LEARN, LONGER OR SHORTER ONES?

Longer. They have more cues.

S.A.C.

MOBILIZATION FOR YOUTH

#6 Intermediate Grades

LET'S ASK RESEARCH . . . ABOUT MENTAL IMAGERY

IS THERE A RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTELLIGENCE AND IMAGERY?

Nope!

DO GIRLS HAVE MORE IMAGERY THAN BOYS?

Yes! But this levels off as we near junior high school.

IS AGE RELATED TO IMAGERY?

Probably not.

DOES READING AGE CORRELATE WITH IMAGERY?

Slightly, but significantly.

WHAT READING FACTORS ARE MOST CLOSELY RELATED TO IMAGERY?

Liking to read, amount of free reading, and associational recall.

WHAT TYPES OF READING ELICIT THE MOST IMAGERY?

Adventure and cowboy stories.

(Comics elicit the least.)

S.A.C.

MOBILIZATION FOR YOUTH

#7 Intermediate Grades

LET'S ASK RESEARCH ABOUT . . .

TEXTS AND WORKBOOKS

ARE THE ILLUSTRATIONS RELEVANT TO THE TEXT IN BASAL READERS?

Not often enough. In grades 4 - 6, inaccurate illustrations of facts, misplacement of illustrations, irrelevant illustrations, abound.

HOW MUCH TEXTBOOK CONTENT IS PLAIN VERBIAGE?

In ten 5th grade history texts 74.51% of the total activities involved mere retention and use of words without a knowledge of their meaning.

HOW HOMOGENEOUS IN LEVEL, CONTENT, AND SKILLS TRAINING ARE TEXTS AND WORKBOOKS IN GRADES 4, 5 AND 6?

They defy generalizations. The variability is shocking!

S.A. C.

MOBILIZATION FOR YOUTH

MOBILIZATION FOR YOUTH - EDUCATION - READING PROGRAM

SURVEY OF READING RESEARCH

Bulletin #8 Intermediate Grades

LET'S ASK RESEARCH ---- ABOUT STUDY SKILLS

All answers are based on empirical evidence collected in research at Boston University.

WHAT IS THE ORDER OF DIFFICULTY OF SIX BASIC SKILLS? (Difficult to easy)

For grades 4-6:

1. Finding minor ideas with major ideas supplied.
2. Selection of best summary.
3. Retention of order of ideas.
4. Matching headlines and paragraphs.
5. Finding major ideas with minor ideas supplied.
6. Writing original headlines.

WHAT IS THE ORDER OF DIFFICULTY OF FOUR TYPES OF SKIMMING? (Difficult to easy)

1. Locating answers to questions which use different vocabulary from that found in the selection.
2. Locating answers to questions which use same vocabulary as found in selection.
3. Locating proper names and dates.
4. Matching topics to paragraphs.

CAN SELF DIRECTED SELF CORRECTED EXERCISES IN ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS WORK IN THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES WITH RETARDED READERS?

Yes. One study shows scores doubled in only 8 weeks with fourth graders.

CAN ABILITY TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN STATEMENTS OF FACT AND OPINION BE TAUGHT TO AVERAGE 4th and 5th GRADERS USING SELF DIRECTING SELF CORRECTING EXERCISES.

Yes. This skill, however, correlates with intelligence scores.

DO GRADED STUDY GUIDES AID RECALL IN CONTENT AREAS?

Yes. This is true in both oral and written recall.

WHICH IS EASIER FOR THE CHILD, ORAL OR WRITTEN RECALL?

Both show gains when taught for. Children reproduced easy material in writing as well as or better than orally. When difficulty of material increases, oral recall surpasses written recall.

WHICH IS EASIER FOR THE CHILD, UNAIDED ORAL, UNAIDED WRITTEN OR MULTIPLE-CHOICE RECALL?

For grades 3,4,5,6 and college juniors, multiple choice recall brings higher comprehension scores in study after study.

INFORMATION RETRIEVAL CENTER ON THE DISADVANTAGED

LET'S ASK RESEARCH --- ABOUT STUDY SKILLS

DO CHILDREN USING THE MOST WORDS HAVE THE BEST WRITTEN RECALL SCORES?

Nope.

DOES TEAM LEARNING USING SELF DIRECTING MATERIALS INCREASE SCORES ON TESTS OF ORAL AND WRITTEN RECALL?

Study after study show that students make significant gains.

WHAT IS THE BEST TEAM LEARNING SIZE FOR FIFTH GRADERS?

Three; 2, 5 follow in that order. One is last.

FOR GRADES 4,5,6, WHICH IS BETTER: PAIRED STUDY OR INDIVIDUAL STUDY?

Paired.

IS TEAM LEARNING MORE EFFECTIVE THAN INDIVIDUAL LEARNING?

In study after study, students showed greater gains in reading skills learned in groups (two to five) than they did by themselves.

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10/30/63
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